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**Submission to the
Review Committee
Review of Teaching and Teacher
Education**

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***Response to the Review Committee - Young People, Schools
and Innovation: towards an action plan for the school sector.***

Response to the Review Committee - *Young People, Schools and Innovation: towards an action plan for the school sector.*

The Association of Heads of Independent Schools of Australia (AHISA) welcomes the opportunity to provide this additional submission to the one lodged in October 2002. Every effort has been made not to repeat what has already been written but to include further information pertaining to the discussion paper – *Young People, Schools and Innovation: towards an action plan for the school sector.* AHISA especially appreciates the extension of time allowed to us because of the AHISA Study Tour to Toronto and, as requested, has included information gained during that tour.

A group of Principals of Independent schools in Australia visited seven independent schools and the Ontario Institute of School Effectiveness (OISE) at the University of Toronto, spending a whole day in each. (Some examples from Canadian schools and AHISA members' schools are included in the Appendix to this paper rather than the paper itself)

This material is provided from a practitioner's point of view, as the members of AHISA, as leaders in independent schools in Australia, recognise that they must lead the way, in a practical manner, in developing a culture of innovation in their schools.

To be a member of AHISA, a school principal has to be a leader of a not-for-profit school, implement the policies decided upon by the School Council, be responsible for engaging staff and for enrolling students, and have control of the school budget. The fact that each of their schools is independent gives AHISA members power to initiate change more easily than those principals who belong to a system or sector.

Innovation is therefore easier in AHISA members' schools. Providing principals have the support of their School Council, they can develop capacity for innovation, especially if they have good strategies that include understanding the pitfalls, planning properly and paying attention to detail while allowing flexibility within the implementation of the innovation. Therefore there are many examples of innovative practices in our schools. Innovation isn't just about good ideas – innovation happens when good ideas are shaped into actions.

Often principals have good ideas but the implementation isn't well done. Often what is required is a couple of single issue fanatics on staff to help to implement and institutionalise innovations. These people must believe in the cause, have a sense of urgency to get things done and take some responsibility for implementing the reform.

Principals in independent schools also know that they must enlist the help of supporters from both inside and outside the school, if they are to manage this task. Therefore they must communicate their vision and strategy to the whole school community, not just to the teachers in the school, so that everyone has that sense of ownership that is essential for irreversible change. They also know that they need a constant supply of hard data – so that they can constantly monitor the situation. (Michael Barber (ICSEI 2003) likens it to keeping your eye on the dashboard while driving a car!

However if principals are to be leaders of innovative schools hence providing the best possible learning environment for their students, they first need to understand the learning process, be able to engage in futures thinking, have contextual knowledge about the school situation and be able to make quality judgements. They also need political acumen and emotional understanding, and the ability to communicate successfully with people.

Principals are the key to creating innovative schools that are indeed learning communities.

1. Learning Communities

Schools in the 21st century have to be transformed into self-motivated and self-directed learning communities where students, teachers and parents are all learners and where it is understood that all learn differently and have different preferred learning styles.

David Hargraves in his Seminar paper *From Improvement to Transformation* (IARTV Seminar Series No 122 –2003) describes transformation as a fundamental change that involves radical, not just incremental innovation. Incremental innovation starts from the present and works steadily forwards; radical innovation starts from the future and works backwards and it requires imagination, creativity, autonomy and risk-taking. The deep level of change and transformation necessary to meet the needs of young people of today, rather than being a single change process, will need to be an ongoing, dynamic process of major change and evolution. Principals need to be transformational to develop innovative schools. (Appendix Note 1)

Ideally principals need to be strong pedagogical leaders if they are to encourage radical innovation because the whole culture of their school may need to change if the school is to be turned into a learning community. However with the increasingly complex demand on the time and energy of principals, it is not always possible for them to keep abreast of all of the latest developments. If this is the case, it is vitally important that there is a strong pedagogical leader in a senior position in the leadership team of the school. This person must have the full support of the principal. This is happening increasingly in Canadian independent schools, where principals have to spend much of their time raising money to keep their schools operating at an optimum level. These principals are enlisting highly respected and forward thinking pedagogical innovators to be part of their leadership team and this process appears to be working well because the context of the school situation and the principal's role is understood by their communities. (Appendix Note 2)

The development of schools as learning communities depends to a huge extent on building capacity for teacher and leader learning that are essential for the development of high quality student learning, the fundamental purpose of a school. Schools have set up innovative centres for learning and research institutes to assist with professional learning (PL). (Appendix Note 3)

Electronic networking among colleagues provides one example of how PL can be achieved. Members of AHISA and their staff find that the various AHISA professional learning networks provide opportunities for peer learning and the exchange of information, in the AHISA learning community. (Appendix Note 4)

Networks are becoming increasingly important in all schools of today as teachers have learned to work more collaboratively. Sometimes innovative groups form when teachers from a cluster of schools come together. It is sometimes beneficial to move away from

immediate colleagues to a wider network for cross pollination of ideas. Professional networks as well as professional associations will probably play an increasingly larger part in the development of innovative practices in schools.

Study Leave or sabbaticals play an important part in leader learning in AHISA Members' schools. Most principals have an arrangement with their School Councils that is based on approximately twelve weeks paid leave per five years of service, but the configurations of this leave vary from school to school. All expenses are paid for the duration of this leave. This is a most important and highly valued part of a principal's professional learning as it provides opportunities for principals

- (i) to examine what is being done in educational fields from a global perspective
 - (ii) to visit other schools
 - (iii) to be part of study tours similar to the Canadian Tour mentioned in this paper
 - (iv) to attend international conferences and
 - (v) to reflect on various practices that could work well in their own schools.
- Canadian principals were extremely envious of this opportunity for PL.
(Appendix Note 19)

2. Students and their learning

Learning is a dynamic, challenging and active process for it is about making connections and making sense of the world around us. Schools therefore must offer a wide set of conditions where learning can take place, where students can become engaged and enjoy the learning process.

Students need to be able to seize opportunities to learn throughout their lives as they adapt to a changing, increasingly complex world. Many of our schools have adopted the four pillars of learning – learning to know, learning to do, learning to live together and learning to be - (International Commission on Education for the 21st Century – Report to UNESCO 1996) - as a learning framework for developing their school programs.

The learning process works differently for all children at different stages of their development. There has been much innovation in the setting up of recent Early Learning Centres in our schools. This has happened because there has been time to understand the learning process, decide on the underlying philosophy for the centre, and to plan effectively before setting up these centres. (Appendix Note 5)

Middle schooling has been developing for more than a decade and almost half of AHISA members' schools have student-centred, middle schooling working well in their schools catering for the needs of students in this developmental stage. There are 136 members of the AHISA Middle Schooling Network, MidNet. This means that nearly half of our members' schools have middle schooling operating. Innovation is flourishing here, where learning is not restricted by the threat of "outside" examinations. (Appendix Note 6)

In an innovative school, innovation by students is encouraged. By encouraging students to turn their good ideas into actions, teachers are helping students to learn by actually allowing them to take risks in the sheltered environment of a school where they can learn from their mistakes without dire consequences. Eltham College (Victoria) considers this an important part of their innovative work.

Student Leadership is an important part of life in our schools. There are many different types of programs, some encompassing all students on the premise that anyone can learn to lead, given support, some following servant-leadership models, many to do with linking leadership and responsibilities. Many of these programs include older students

assisting younger students in tutoring and mentoring programs, the most progressive are those that are developed from the ideas of the students themselves. (Appendix Note 15)

Conferences and seminars for student leaders in have been conducted successfully in Australia for a number of years but there has been added impetus during the last five years when the concept of leadership has broadened. the Alliance of Girls' Schools (Australasia) holds successful week-long conferences in the January vacation, each year in a different state.

Many schools have developed Thinking and Learning courses using the work by David Perkins (Learning for Understanding), Art Costa (Habits of Mind), Howard Gardner (Multiple Intelligences), DeBono and others as they strive to develop their students to be creative and complex thinkers and problem solvers able to apply knowledge to real-life situations. Usually these courses include collaborative planning, integrated units, authentic assessment, seeking 'understanding goals' and developing 'guiding questions' in all planning of curriculum units. (Appendix Note 7)

Education for Global Citizenship provides examples of innovation in many Australian and Canadian schools. Use of the Internet has allowed students to become more committed to involvement in their world on a global scale. There is authenticity of learning as they begin to understand the cultures, environments, conditions and points of view of people from other parts of the world. (Appendix Note 8)

Some Australian schools have commenced sister school arrangements, dual campus schools and overseas campuses. The international aspect of schooling is seen as important. Schools have students and staff exchanges, overseas study tours, they belong to international associations and students and staff attend international conferences. These all assist in teacher, leader and student learning and provide opportunities to see innovations at work in other settings. (Appendix Note 9)

Students learn best in a social setting when they have positive relationships with their teachers. Relevant learning, especially learning in real life situations provides real learning experiences for students, made much easier when they see relevance in what is presented to them.. Programs like Young Achievers used in our schools and the Robotics School Competition program used in US, UK and Canadian schools are examples of how a real-life extra-curricular activity can provide relevant learning and also perhaps influence what is taught in the curriculum (Appendix Note 10)

The provision of enrichment of learning opportunities lends impetus to many innovative programs in schools. These often occur through centres of learning established for this purpose but often through teachers proposing and then preparing special programs for students. Many of these occur in primary and middle schools, some are offered in upper school and some become total school programs with thematic approach. Upper Canada College uses a total school approach with its Green School project. University of Toronto Schools (a selective school for gifted students) offers special programs for higher order thinkers. One example is an advanced philosophy course. A wine making course for Year 10s taught in an architect-designed, state of the art, industry standard facility in a South Australian School is certainly innovative!

Other examples of these are the Advance Placement Courses (really first year university courses) offered to final year students and partnerships with universities, colleges and TAFE. (Appendix Note 11)

A very special innovative program

Some of the most exciting language learning that was seen during our Canadian Study Tour was the learning of a foreign language by the gesture method and real consideration should be given to examining how this could work in the Australian context. (For this reason I have included at this point a report I wrote while in Toronto – Hazel Day)

The Accelerative Integrated Method (AIM) is a multidimensional, holistic and systematic approach to the teaching of French using a variety of interconnected components (Gesture Approach (GA), Pared Down Language (PDL), story, drama and music). Together, this approach forms a powerfully integrated whole in second language teaching.

It has been developed by Wendy Maxwell, a French educator of 20 years, based in Vancouver, Canada, who has spent a decade researching how children learn a first language and acquire a second language. Wendy is an award-winning teacher whose research also included action research in a core French classroom. For more information on Wendy and Matt Maxwell please visit www.muffineducational.com

Wendy currently teaches at York House in Vancouver, but formerly taught at Bishop Strachan School in Toronto. Her research was born out of the frustration she, other teachers, students and parents felt with the then current core French programs where they found fluency was rarely achieved, there was a lack of motivation and unhappiness at the lack of progress of the students. AIM is the result of Wendy setting out to create a more effective curriculum.

AIM more closely parallels an immersion style of program than the traditional, theme-based communicative approaches. It is verb-based.

The goals of AIM are to help teachers effectively lead students to much higher levels of confidence and fluency in French than has been possible through other theme-based approaches, and to ensure that language is presented and acquired in a systematic manner so that fluency development is accelerated effectively.

From the beginning of language acquisition, there is a balance among all four language skills (reading, writing, listening and speaking). It also allows visual and auditory learners the opportunity to enhance language skills equally. The activities of AIM respond to a variety of intelligences, including kinesthetic, linguistic, musical, interpersonal and intrapersonal.

AIM allows children to

- Experience language in a contextualized form through story, theatre, drama and music
- Acquire language kinesthetically (GA)
- Acquire high frequency vocabulary (PDL)
- Maximize their production of the language

Major components of AIM are

- Pared Down Language (PDL) – This is a carefully selected, high frequency vocabulary designed specifically to help students reach a critical level of fluency. It consists of over 700 lexical elements of *selected* vocabulary

- Integrated Content through story, drama, music and dance containing the PDL – This focus provides meaningful contextualization and integration of the PDL most effectively in a second language classroom
- Scaffolded language manipulation activities integrated with story and containing the PDL – Students are provided with activities that are completed both orally and in written form that allow teachers to maximise the use of a well-known text or play. The activities move from very simple to increasingly more demanding until students are able to create stories, plays, poems and other pieces independently.
- The Gesture Approach (GA) – This is the PDL through actions or gestures (a type of “sign language” where the students physically act out their sentences) both isolated and integrated with story and language manipulation activities. The GA accelerates the acquisition of the PDL and gives students the tools to speak spontaneously.
- Pleasant repetition/Emotional language – This ensures that enough exposure occurs so that effective language acquisition takes place. The language contains an emotional hook to enhance more rapid acquisition
- Nonverbal communication – Appropriate facial expression, posturing and natural gesture is important to indicate meaning and encourage and enhance comprehension
- Emphasis on production – The more students write, the better writers they become. The more students speak, the better speakers they become.

The program is built around how fairly simple hand gestures can help students to comprehend a second language and to remember the subject matter. Wendy says, “Everyone uses gestures to help them get a point across, but by using a defined set of gestures, the use of gesture is taken to a whole new level. For me this opened up doors to communication with my students that I would not have thought possible.”

AIM is based on familiar stories and fairy tales rather than themes. The extensive use of drama and acting is not only fun but allows lots of pleasant repetition. At each level students work on a fairy tale or play for an extended period of time, doing various activities associated with the play to reinforce the words they have learned. Many of the plays written for the program are based on songs from CDs recorded by Wendy’s husband, Matt, a musician who specializes in French recordings and performances for children. Wendy has just prepared the first secondary play for use in the program.

In order for the program to be successful, it is of primary importance that students will only use French in class – French or nothing at all! – from the very first day of the program. Neither the teacher nor the students should ever hear English from one another in the classroom.

It is much better to start learning a second language early. This approach is very much developmental – it is being used successfully in primary schools. In fact the lessons I watched were with Year 4 students at Havergal College who had been in the program since Year 1. Their level of fluency was at Year 8 level. Two of the other schools we visited were also using this method in the primary years. One principal was not sure if it would translate into the secondary school but felt that if they had achieved the fluency that was possible in the primary school then this would augur well for their work in the secondary school even if the more traditional them based methods were used. It has been used with beginners’ level in the first year of secondary school, where they have caught up with those children who have been studying using the more traditional approach, fairly easily and quickly.

The really successful teacher using this approach is an extroverted, dramatic “people-person” but that does not mean that more reticent teachers cannot learn the skills. I spoke to one extraverted teacher who was reveling in it. I spoke to another quieter teacher who was not sure she could do it at first, because it is a loud dynamic way to teach French and she felt she might not be able to keep the boys in her class under control. However she tried it and found the boys more focused, they enjoyed the action, and their French skills improved dramatically.

Probably a year of professional learning is required to be extremely successful with this method, but this learning can be developmental too while you are taking lessons with students. (Many of the 700 gestures to match the PDL are self-explanatory.)

Success in building the confidence of the language learners largely comes from the fact that most of the speaking is done together (teachers and students) which means that no-one feels singled out – unless of course they want to be. There are plenty of opportunities to answer the teacher’s questions if you wish.

Success in the program can be assisted by the teacher appreciating all the students, participating actively and expecting the students to do so, internalizing and ensuring that the PDL becomes part of every aspect of the teaching and language use.

Humour is also a key to success, motivation and the reduction of stress. It is good if there is a lot of laughing. Celebration of achievements is also important – the use of “excellent” and “fantastic” is recommended! The teacher showing enjoyment of their students’ success and ability to communicate in French is also important. Let them leave the lesson feeling good. (Appendix Note 12)

Co-curricular and extra-curricular activities have always been part of an independent school’s educational offering but with the emphasis on the “new basics” these programs are often being given more prominence and offer opportunities for innovation because of the flexibility they have. Co-curricular and extra-curricular programs are a vital part of school life in Canadian Independent schools too. In many cases they have become part of the curriculum, especially community service programs that are often assessed and often provide credits for their graduation certificates. Teachers were at school for longer days – but their actual teaching contact time was shorter. However they were very much involved in extra-curricular activities which they see as a really important part of the educational offering. (Appendix Note 18)

. “Do well and do good” is the motto of one school principal. They see community spirit as a connection for life. The Horizons Tutoring Program where students from Upper Canada College tutor inner city students is a highly successful program. (Appendix Note 13)

Service to the Community has always been strong in our schools and there are many innovative programs that develop a sense of citizenship and service in the students.

Service-Learning is a 20 year old US program that is mandated in most states and many universities. It takes what has been done as community service in the past and brings the learning associated with this back into the classroom for reflection. Service Learning

has been working in some Australian schools for a few years and has had some outstanding successes. Service Learning can be K-12, part of the curriculum; is experiential education and creates great excitement and commitment. (Appendix Note 14)

3. Whole school change for different outcomes

The whole school community must be involved in the creation of an innovative school and for this to happen the whole school community must understand the direction in which the school is moving. Students especially need to be involved because they understand their needs and wants, more than others sometimes understand, and they can become innovative leaders in their schools. The reasons why so many youngsters find school uninteresting, dull and boring need to be understood and lessons learned, for the core business of our schools is the learning of students and the cultivation of **enjoying** learning for the future.

What is required is the creation of the best possible environment for students to learn which today may mean a whole school culture change. (Appendix Note 20)

Schools of today need to prepare their students to be responsible and contributing citizens in the knowledge society as well as preparing them for workplaces in the knowledge economy. Students should be encouraged towards learning to create, to solve problems, to think critically, and to care about others and the environment. These skills will assist them to become contributors to their world as well as equip them for careers. Innovative schools use content in an applied fashion, as a vehicle for learning with assessment in real life activities. The Green School project (UCC) promises to develop responsible citizens as well as people who can solve real-life environmental problems using its whole campus as a vehicle for learning.

In innovative schools classrooms are becoming learning centred and all sorts of configurations are being used. Some of these rooms resemble modern-day open plan offices with workplaces for students and areas set aside for certain types of work. Others resemble boardrooms. All have the flexibility to allow students to work in groups. Appleby College in Oakville Ontario is an innovative technology school in (an e-school) where every classroom has a smart board and data projector for the use of students and staff and technology is integrated into the curriculum. Harkness tables (oval boardroom style tables with inbuilt computer connections, specially designed for small student-centred classes) are extensively and effectively used. They allow for interactive dynamic classes where it is impossible for students to hide at the back of the class! They all sit round a Harkness table in their classroom and all are involved in the class. Staff reported real gains especially in the teaching of English and other languages in these classes.

The students of today are very different from those of the last century, because they are part of the net generation, where technology is a given and many doors are opened for them with their use of the Internet and other communication technologies. They learn differently, certainly not linearly, and as a consequence they have to be treated differently. One example can be seen in the need to involve them in some of the policy-making decisions that are made in a school context. The framing of mobile phone policies in schools is a case in point. Mobile phone usage has reached such a stage with text messaging etc that students need to be involved in policy decisions to do with this sort of technology. Students understand how its extensive use and can suggest ways of using it innovatively in schools.

In an innovative school, the school day becomes more flexible and the staff members' roles and practices alter. Already many of our schools are employing specialists in fields other than education to take on certain defined roles. Leaders are sure to encounter resistance from some in their school community to this initiative for there are some people who do not realise that change is here to stay.

One of the best ways to accomplish change is to have an adult educator, a change-agent come into the school for periods at a time, working with the whole community. When innovation happens in schools it is often within groups of interested people in the school, thinking and working together, with the opportunity to take risks, without censure learning from mistakes for success in the future. Innovation in the classroom often leads to whole school change. If school capacity building is to be increased, there needs to be a critical mass of innovative teachers involved in a professional learning environment.. For sustainability is to be achieved, structures need to be put in place in a school and continued support obtained from the school community.

Innovative schools require a certain amount of trust. Teachers need to trust that students will undertake tasks and develop creative ways of working; parents need to trust that freedom is not licence and that the end result will be better learning than the instruct/ recall/ test/forget which so often happens now. The Senior Leadership Team of a school needs to trust that teachers are able to give students freedom which will be purposefully used. An example of this trust is when students are given the opportunity to do a long-term project as a module in their program - instead of one that is already in the curriculum offering. Some schools are finding that this sort of independent study is producing some extremely fine work. (Appendix Note 16)

4. Teachers

Just as the choosing of a principal is the most important task that a School Council of an Independent School has, so the most important task for the Principal of that school is the choosing of its staff for teachers are a school's greatest asset and resource. Principals of AHISA schools value this opportunity, not always afforded to principals in other schools.

To work in an innovative school, teachers need to understand learning (especially their own learning styles), have the necessary content knowledge kept up-to-date, and be able to put learning and content knowledge together to develop effective teaching. Teachers must be responsive to the needs of students and be flexible and adaptable, understanding the fundamentals of change.

A teacher's role is complex – it is not just a facilitator's role. The professional learning of teachers is an ongoing process. Professional learning (PL) is a key element of an innovative school and it must be really good, sustained professional learning that has as its core, improvement of the learning of students. Teacher learning in the classroom (i.e. in their teacher environment) needs to be supported. In-service and support from leaders within the school is required. Some schools have a position or a centre devoted to leading this work. Some schools have a PL component as part of their evaluation of teaching staff. (Appendix Note 17)

Teachers have always been role models for their students and this is still the case in an innovative school. If the students of today are to become adaptable, flexible and highly effective learners, their teachers must also have these traits. If students need the ability to think constructively, to learn on the job, to work in teams, to cope with and solve problems, to communicate well verbally and to be creative, then their teachers must also

aim to have these qualities. Each group can learn from each other: in fact they can become co-learners and co-workers.

Teacher Education

Professor Alan Hayes of Macquarie University considers that people are now recognising that health and education are fundamental areas that have a profound impact on citizens throughout their lives. He feels confident that teacher education is about to be re-invigorated, re-shaped and re-directed with programs that better prepare teachers for a career in schools. (Education Review – April 2003) If this is the case then there will be great applause from our Association. Principals in independent schools look forward to hearing more of such change.

Pre-service training must include language learning techniques. The teaching of French by the gesture method is one such applied example. This is the sort of innovative practice that needs to be seen in the professional learning of language teachers.

Practitioners should be more involved in teacher education. It would be good if an intern year could be considered perhaps as a fourth year of an Education Degree. Practicum supervisors need to be good teachers as well as understanding what makes a good teacher in an innovative school.

One innovation in teacher education at the University of Toronto that works well is the development of cohorts. Within the cohort, the set curriculum is covered but modified to address the needs of the cohort. E.g. A cohort that focuses on Gifted and Enriched programs modifies the set curriculum to address the needs of the intellectually able. Teachers of languages have to take the same training as everyone else in Canada to qualify as teachers but there is a special cohort for language teachers, which addresses some of their unique needs. (C. Beck and C. Kosnik (2002) "From cohort to community" in Teaching and Teacher Education, Vol 17, 925-948)

AHISA members in general find that mature teachers who have chosen teaching as a later career are often excellent value in a school. They have expertise in real life situations in fields other than teaching and now want to make a difference for students. These people must be given every encouragement and should be supported by scholarships or other means during the time it takes them to qualify as teachers.

5. Leadership

Professor Michael Fullan considers leadership as the most important domain of transformation in a school. (Address to Australian Principals Study Tour at OISE May 2003). Professor Blair Mascal says it is essential for change in a school and that it has the most impact on the other dimensions, but he also says that in their research they are broadening the concept of leadership to shared leadership among many people within the school. He is also of the view that Heads of schools must take pedagogy seriously and is not in favour of Heads of schools not having a good grasp of pedagogy. (Study Tour Session OISE May 2003)

Innovative Leadership

Innovative leadership includes making people in schools feel valued so that they want to belong, to make a difference, to come to work. It includes giving them a good environment, treating them professionally and expecting them to behave professionally.

Innovative leadership means being a part of a leadership team in the school, working collaboratively with the people in a school.

As Professor David Perkins says – *“A facilitative leader harvests the power of the many minds in the group for a positive spirit. Authoritarian leaders do not trust others to think with them, so they don’t take advantage of the minds in the group. Organizational intelligence concerns how well people put their heads together in a group, team, organization or community. Pooling mental effort is hard. Organizational intelligence depends on ways of interacting with one another that shows good knowledge processing (smart collective thinking) and positive symbolic conduct (broadcasting positive attitudes and expectations)”* (An interview about his book – King Arthur’s Round Table)

And finally while in Toronto we were treated to an excellent talk by a staff member at Upper Canada College. It was a talk about leadership illustrated by pictures of great art works. It seems fitting to end this paper with the text of that talk.

Leadership is a commitment to ethical, dynamic values and the behaviours associated with them.

Leadership arises from and lives in a community. A leader is in tune with his environment.

Leaders create, support and are part of high performing teams.

Leadership is comparative – it is at once derivative and formative

Leadership is creative. Leaders think in metaphors.

Leadership is augmented by a breadth of experience.

Leaders have several dynamic interpretive paradigms

Leadership takes into account the ordinary and finds in it nobility opportunity worth

Leadership is rooted in a deep satisfaction with and knowledge of who you are. It begins with self respect, a belief that the world’s challenges are opportunities and possibilities

Leadership embraces complexity; it sees unresolved tensions as opportunities

Leaders can laugh at themselves.

Leaders dare to imagine

Authorised by the Chair of the Association of Heads of Independent Schools of Australia



Noelene Horton

Prepared by the Executive Officer



Hazel Day

15th May 2003

Appendix.

Some Examples of Innovations.

Documentation to support examples from Canadian schools and some Australian schools is available from Hazel Day at the AHISA Secretariat. Many of our members' schools have not been named in this paper. This is because there are many examples from many schools, in some cases too numerous to mention.

1. Some schools have begun a process of transformation, of **radical innovation**. One example is *Growing Individuals and Communities* – Loreto Normanhurst – Sydney – where the two fold emphasis is of quality learning and quality relationships.

2. **Pedagogical leaders** in leading positions in Canadian schools such as Bishop Strachan School, Holy Trinity School and Upper Canada College, Toronto. Similar positions are held by Directors of Teaching and Learning, Readers in Curriculum, etc in Australian schools.

3. Centres of Learning and Research Institutes

(a) Eureka! Centre - Teacher Professionalism and Development at the University of Toronto Schools (UTS) where the emphasis is on research, development and dissemination by practitioners for practitioner, and ongoing support for teacher education.

The Centre (i) co-ordinates practitioner research and development projects at UTS
(ii) identifies document and promote exemplary classroom practices
(iii) works actively to improve education through research and innovation
(iv) helps establish outreach activities with specific focus on curricular and instructional excellence.

Eureka! Fellowships enable Eureka! Fellows to teach half time and do action research half time for two years at UTS.

(b) Many opportunities exist for staff members in our schools to participate in extended professional learning activities. One of our schools in Brisbane has launched a **Staff Fellowship Fund** allowing a successful staff member to take full leave with expenses for 12 months to work on an innovative initiative of benefit to the School and the profession.

(c) Centres for Learning

These centres have been set up in some schools for the benefit of students, teachers and other members of the school community on the premise that everyone learns differently – and it is a matter of understanding how the different learning styles work and assisting people in developing strategies appropriate to their learning profile.

Co-ordination of the efforts of staff occurs there where a professional learning committee to guide the programs. They are also research institutes where research projects involving students and teachers originate. Action research is a large part of the work done there – learning what works and then making it intentional.

Students' needs are considered appropriate to their development.

Important points about these centres if they are to work well -

They must be connected to what is going on in the school

They must be demystified – it must be considered a normal activity to enter the centre

Students with ideas come in and are helped to plan and organise these ideas to help them to come to fruition.

There is a **Centre for Learning** such as this at Upper Canada College (UCC) Toronto

(d) An example of a **research institute** is to be found at Abbotsleigh (Sydney). AbbSearch is a Centre for Research that has been implemented to promote research and its best use. The aims are to:

1. Make research findings available to teaching staff in order to shape their pedagogy;
2. Do original research at the school in academic, pedagogical and pastoral care areas and to help evaluate changes in school program and administration;
3. Supervise post grad students working at Abbotsleigh on educational research theses that would benefit us;
4. Encourage and supervise staff and students undertaking original research in any area;
5. Share and publish research done by AbbSearch. AbbSearch produces a termly professional development journal for our staff, mostly telling of original research or experiences of staff and sometimes students. Through AbbSearch we attend and present at conferences and hope to sponsor a conference soon.

4. AHISA Professional Networks – These are managed and driven by the Executive Officer. There is HeadNet for members of AHISA, then for staff in our schools there are DepNet for senior Deputies, CareNet, for leaders of Pastoral Care in our schools, MidNet for leaders of Middle Schooling, CoedNet for those interested in Co-educational issues, BoyNet for those interested in boys' education issues and YakNet for teachers in independent schools. There is also ChairNet for Chairs of our Governing Bodies to exchange information on governance issues. These are well used and many responses of general use are placed in the members' section of the AHISA website under the heading *Previously Asked Questions*.

5. Early Learning Centres

(a) Staff members from our members' schools have visited Reggio Emilia in Italy and established Reggio Emilia based Early Childhood programs in their Early Learning Centres. Bialik College (Victoria), Presbyterian Ladies' College (Western Australia) and Bishop Strachan School (Toronto) are just three schools with such a Centre.

(b) Bishop Druiitt College (New South Wales) is an example of good planning to set up a Centre for K-2 children, where the focus is on the developmental learning stages rather than year level stages. There is a close relationship with other students and teachers, leadership opportunities for the children, team teaching and co-operative learning in a family-feel atmosphere where parents are very much involved.

6. Probably half of our schools have **Middle Schooling** and within this section of their school programs many innovations, too many to list here. The following are just a few examples from a huge list.

A Centre that is a complete attempt to create new pedagogy which reflects modern understandings about learning – brain research, multiple intelligences, learning styles, matched with teacher development, an ICT rich environment, linked projects between subjects, year levels or across year levels Korawa Anglican Girls' School – (Melbourne, Victoria).

Year 9 Student Parliament - Front benchers are the 24 Middle School House Captains and all Year 9 students are members of a sub-committee - either Public Relations, Health & the Environment, Welfare, Service and Sport. The Year 9 front benchers visit and help to represent the other Year 7 and 8 pastoral care groups in the Middle School. Parliament is held every fortnight. Immanuel Lutheran College, Maroochydore (Queensland)

Community environmental issues researched by Middle Year students often with relevant learning links to Council parks, reserves, school dams etc.

Special Activities - Programs designed to enable all Middle School students to join together for activities that they would not normally do during the school day. One such program is for girls at Ruyton Girls' School (Melbourne) to gather for a double period once a fortnight to take part in a range of joint projects. The girls take part in creative, physical and social activities as well as curriculum events. The activities are designed to promote social interaction, stimulating exploration of issues, develop new skills and it bonds both staff and students that generates interaction across the year level.

7. Many schools have developed innovative **Thinking and Learning** Curricula. A B Paterson College (Queensland), All Saints Anglican School (Queensland), St Ignatius College (South Australia), Brisbane Grammar School and Brisbane Girls' Grammar School (Queensland), St Michaels Collegiate School and Sacred Heart College (Tasmania) are examples of schools that have taken this path.

8. International Education

(a) World Class Project – Education for Global Citizenship – an Internet-based project organised by Havergal College, Toronto for students from three countries.

(b) Involvement in the Round Square Conference (Ivanhoe Boys' Grammar School (Victoria) and Appleby College, Ontario.

9. School International Links

(a) Hamilton-Gaoyou Twin Campus School

Hamilton is located in the Western District of Victoria and the sister city of Gaoyou, an industrial city in Jiangsu Province, China. The Hamilton & Alexandra College is a P-12 co-educational day and boarding school for 380 students. This program for their Year 9 students called *The China Experience* recognises the opportunity to nurture the sense of belonging to a *world of differences* amongst their students.

A mission statement has been created to serve the twin campus program.

To foster mutual respect for the cultures of Australia and China

To nurture friendship and understanding

To develop and improve the learning of English and Mandarin Chinese

To encourage educational exchange

To provide a unique International Experience

In 2002, Hamilton's entire Year 9 group travelled together to China for one month.

(b) Caulfield Grammar School (Victoria) has an overseas campus in China.

(c) Schools in all states have sister school arrangements with schools all over the world that involve student and staff exchanges for varying lengths of time.

10. Extra-curricular activities that are examples of relevant learning and may influence what is taught in the curriculum

(a) Projects such as Young Achievers allow considerable room for student innovation and creative thought and many of our schools use these programs well. Students are required to organise themselves, decide on their own project, get it done, and report on it. Inefficiencies occur, and the supervising teacher needs to be able to stand back and let students learn from their mistakes. Students learn about self and project management. Often their learning translates into business-style courses in the curriculum.

(b) First Robotics Competition is a highly successful international competition organised by First, whose vision is to inspire in young people, their schools and communities with an appreciation of science and technology, and of how mastering these can enrich the lives of all. www.usfirst.org

The 2003 competition was the twelfth annual robotics competition. 800 teams came from schools in US, UK, Canada and Brazil taking part in learning not only to make robots to solve a problem but also the value of working with others in a team, while becoming interested in science and technology and having fun. Students have six weeks in which to change a kit of more than 100 parts into a robot that will accomplish a set task well. Many of the students choose engineering as a future course after being involved in this innovative scheme.

Because of the interest in this co-curricular activity and success in the competition, Crescent School, Ontario has now included in their school program a Year 11 Course - *Technological Design* - which includes modules on Commercial design, Engineering Statics, Engineering dynamics, The impact of engineering in the real world.

11. Enrichment Courses

(a) Philosophy: The Big Questions.

A UTS Year 11 Course designed to enrich and stretch the thinking of Year 11 students. This course addresses the following questions – What is a person? What is a meaningful life? What are good and evil? What is a just society? What is human knowledge? How do we know what is beautiful in art music and literature? Students will learn critical thinking skills in evaluating philosophical arguments related to these questions, as well as skills used in researching and investigating various topics in philosophy.

(b) Agreements with universities on joint projects – these provide innovative opportunities in both Australia and Canada for students

(c) Advanced placement courses – allow for enrichment of student learning by offering first year university level courses to school students (well used in Canada)

(d) International Baccalaureate (47 of the 51 Australian schools taking the IB are independent schools) Upper Canada College (Toronto) has found the IB especially helpful to boys who enjoy having goals set for them and transparent standards. The lower 20% cohort has shown the most marked gains in improvement of student outcomes.

(e) **The Green School Project**

Upper Canada College's latest initiative is to turn its school into a green school. This innovative project that involves sensitivity to and sustainability of the environment has attracted interest from outside the school resulting in a number of partnerships being formed. They intend to include in the curriculum, studies of an environmental nature, but especially geo-thermal studies and studies of the best use of water. They will use their facilities as study tools for their students, they intend to investigate material movement to and from the campus and study organisational behaviour, expecting to find many ways to re-cycle material and to economise. This 5 year project will have an Executive Director (Facilities), a Curriculum Director and a Human Resource Director. It will be a new way of organising the learning program for the students.

(f) At Faith Lutheran College (South Australia) there is a **wine making course** for their Year 10 students. Approximately 75 are involved each year for a 6 month unit in their agriculture curriculum. As well as aspects of viticulture, the students are involved in every aspect of the winemaking, designing of the labels and marketing of the bottled product. It may well be the first school in the world, to do this all within a purpose-built architect- designed, industry-standard winery building where the students are hands-on at all times without the product leaving our premises. They are already exporting the final product to the USA. Mengler View is the commercial name for the winery. Their wine has already won medals in the open section of the Barossa Valley wine show!

12. Language Learning

Teaching with Gestures - The Accelerative Integrated Method – complete description included in the paper. This successful method has been piloted in schools across Canada, and now Alberta is adopting the program province-wide in its schools

13. Community Service Programs

(a) **Horizons Program**

This is a highly successful tutoring program where senior students from Upper Canada College assist inner city students by enhancing their academic skills in a classroom setting. It is a well-supervised program planned by UCC and partner school teachers. Tutors are trained before they attend at inner city schools where the classroom teachers provide the work and are on site to assist the tutors in supporting their students. It is a year-long program and students who complete the program are granted 50 hours community service towards their final school certificate. Tutoring takes place either before school (charter bus leaves at 7.20 am) or after school (3.35 – 5.20 pm)

(b) At one of our schools in South Australia, all Year 9 and Year 11 students spend 90 minutes each week as part of their Christian living program in local retirement villages, kindergartens, junior primary schools, to help and talk to those at risk either because they are old and infirm, or because they are young and vulnerable. Students go out in pairs and are delivered to the home or school by one of the school buses. A teacher is a supervisor for a group of 10 to 12 students, going with the students each week. Students keep journals and need to present written work on their placement.

(c) At another South Australian school there is a total school Outreach program where the boys are encouraged to assist with the poor and marginalised and to be aware of, and to respond to social justice issues. One recent development is that the Outreach Programme has now extended to the point where parents have become involved in helping as part of the program.

(d) The students in many of our schools assist in retirement homes and charities often helping the adults and volunteers to use computers, especially email, giving them opportunities to use the Internet to link to anywhere in the world.

(e) In a Tasmanian school upper school Physical Education students spend a term coaching students from the transition class at a school for the intellectually disabled.

(f) Moreton Bay College has a Leo Service Club as part of their school. This is a world-acclaimed club, having won international Lions Club Awards. Their presence and activity in the College has ensured a very strong community service ethic pervades the College.

14. Service-Learning Examples

(a) An environmental project in which the entire school had lessons from a resident expert on penguins and then knitted jumpers for penguins who had been in oil slicks and lost their natural protection when cleaned. This project was featured on “Totally Wild” TV program.

(b) An Outback-City experience in which 20 Year 5 and 6 students and one teacher from Cobar and Nyngan came to Abbotsleigh in the holidays and lived in the boarding house where we arranged for them an experience of city life. Each student had a Year 6 girl for a buddy; 30 Year 10 and 11 students were trained as “camp counsellors” to lead activities. All staff and many parents volunteered hundreds of hours in holiday time. Abbotsleigh parents donated much of the cost, eg, transport from Cobar and Nyngan. We obtained a Values Education grant from the Commonwealth Government to cover much of the cost. Students paid nothing.

(c) Crossroads, Hong Kong. 20+ girls, the Chaplain and a teacher went to HK in December holidays to do volunteer work with this charity group, a Christian organisation that collects and distributes goods to small, community charitable projects all around the world. An exercise in Study combined with service.

15. Student Leadership

(a) Trinity College (Victoria) has a strong leadership program.

(b) St Paul’s AGS (Warragul) has a servant-leadership model.

(c) Upper Canada College has an interesting Prefects Program where the students self-nominate at the end of Year 11. There are certain pre-requisites – they have to be solid citizens, serve in some sort of mentoring capacity, serve in a leadership capacity and develop some sort of initiative for the school or community. Many boys nominate and they are notified of their success towards the end of Year 12.

16. The Wild Card Program at St Michael’s Collegiate (Hobart Tasmania)

17. Centre for Learning at UCC, Reader in Curriculum at St Paul’s Waragul, (Victoria). Havergal School in Toronto has an interesting professional learning module in

its Teacher evaluation program that teachers undertake in their fifth year of teaching at the school.

18. At the Bishop Strachan School, Toronto most staff members were there from 8.00 am until 5.00 pm but their contact teaching time was shorter and their involvement in extra curricular activities fairly extensive.

19. The recent AHISA Members' Study Tour to Toronto, the 1996 AHISA Study Tour to Massachusetts, a planned 2004 AHISA Study Tour to New Zealand.

20. The conceptualisation and development of a whole school P-12 approach to personal (social, emotional and life skill) development has been accomplished at Moreton Bay College (Queensland)

21. Student resilience programs have been developed in many of our Junior schools based on the work of Paul Barrett (Griffith University, Queensland) who insists that developing resilience in younger students provides them with coping strategies useful for later stages of their development. Wilderness School in South Australian has very good programs of this sort in their Junior School leading on to their Middle School.